

charges a certain amount for the first minute — no matter how much of the minute is actually used in conversation. After the first minute in the U.S., conversations are billed in one minute increments. Overseas pulses can be as short as three or four seconds (especially for international calls).

**Method** An SCSA definition. The specific implementation of an operation for a class; code that can be executed in response to a request.

**Metric** A benchmark that has nothing to do with a 100.

**Metropolitan Area Network** MAN. A loosely defined term generally understood to describe a data network covering an area larger than a local area network (LAN), but less than a wide area network (WAN). A MAN typically interconnects two or more local area networks, may operate at a higher speed, may cross administrative boundaries, and may use multiple access methods. While MAN is a data term, a MAN may carry data, voice, video, image, and multimedia data. The only true MAN technology is SMDS, which, in fact, is limited to the MAN.

**Metropolitan Dial** The common rotary dial or touchtone pad that contains both numbers and letters. Dials and pads are also available without the letters. Presumably metropolitan areas required the letters because of multiple central office exchanges, but rural areas with few subscribers and only one CO, required just a few digits and no letters.

**Metropolitan Fiber Ring** A metropolitan fiber ring is an advanced, high-speed local network that can also be used to connect businesses and residences directly to a long distance carrier's network, and provide alternatives to the local telecommunications services they have today. This definition, courtesy MCI.

**Metropolitan Statistical Area** MSA. Sometimes known as SMSA, MSAs are areas based on countries as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau that contain cities of 50,000 or more population and the surrounding countries. Using data from the 1980 census, the FCC allocated two cellular licenses to each of the 305 MSAs in the United States.

**MF** Multi-Frequency.

**MFD** Abbreviation for Microfarad; one thousandth of a farad, the unit of measuring capacitance. The capacitor is a common electrical device that can store electric charges, and pass AC but not DC. Most phones use capacitors to disconnect the bell during conversations.

**MFJ** The Modified Final Judgment is the federal court ruling that set up the rules and regulations concerning deregulation and divestiture of AT&T and the Bell system.

**MFLOPS** Million Floating point Operations Per Second. A measure of computing power usually associated with large computers. Also known as MEGAFLOPS.

**MFM** 1. Modified Frequency Modulation. An encoding scheme used to record data on the magnetic surfaces of hard disks. It is the oldest and slowest of the Winchester hard disk interface standards. RLL (Run Length Limited encoding) is a newer standard, for example.

2. Multi Function Module. A term in the AT&T Merlin phone system. MLM is an adapter that has a tip/ring mode for answering machines, modems, FAX machines, and tip/ring alerts, and a Supplemental Alert Adapter mode for 48VDC alerts. It supplies the connection of optional equipment such as answering machines, external alerts, and FAX machines to a Merlin MLX telephone. The MFM is installed inside the MLX telephone.

**MFOS** MultiFunction Operations System. An AT&T term.

**MFP** See MULTI-FUNCTION PERIPHERAL.

**MFS** Multifunction Peripherals. A gadget you connect to your computer that can print, photocopy, fax and scan.

**MFSK** Multiple Frequency Shift Keying.

**MFV** German for tone dialing. Mehrfrequenzverfahren

**MH** Modified Huffman data compression method.

**MHF** Mobile Home Function.

**MHO** The unit of conductivity.

**MHS** Message Handling Service. A program developed by Action Technologies (and others) and marketed by those firms and Novell to exchange files with other programs and send files out through gateways to other computers and mail networks. It is used particularly to link dissimilar electronic-mail systems. A company running e-mail on their internal LAN will dedicate one computer on the network to be a MHS machine. Every hour or so it will call MCI Mail, CompuServe, etc. and download e-mail messages for people and upload messages from people on the network. Once it has the messages downloaded it will distribute them to the people on the LAN the messages are destined for. See MHS MESSAGE HANDLING SYSTEM.

**MHS Enterprise** A messaging installation either on a local or corporate-wide level that uses MHS as its backbone between several messaging applications such as E-mail, scheduling, fax, workflow and more. Gateways are used to connect to X.400 systems, public carriers and mainframe systems.

**MHS Message Handling System** An ISO standard Application Layer protocol that defines a framework for distributing data from one network to several others. It transfers relatively small messages in a store-and-forward manner (defined by ITU-T as X.400 and by ISO as MOTIS/Message-Oriented Text Interchange Standard). See MHS.

**MHz** An abbreviation for Megahertz. One million Hertz. One million cycles per second. Used to measure band and bandwidth. See BAND and BANDWIDTH. Megahertz is also used by the computer industry to mean millions of clock cycles per second, a measure usually applied to the computer's main microprocessor. Everything that happens in a computer is timed according to a clock which ticks millions of times every second. Higher MHz computers work faster than lower MHz computers. But megahertz is not an accurate measure of a microprocessor's speed. Other factors, such as wider data paths and the ability to execute more than one instruction per clock cycle, affect the actual speed of a microprocessor. Which is why a 100 MHz Pentium chip outpaces a 100 MHz Intel DX4 chip. When comparing the speed of one PC to another, there are other factors also, such as the amount and speed of the system's random access memory (RAM).

**MI/MIC** Mode Indicate/Mode Indicate Common, also called Forced or Manual Originate. Provided for installations where other equipment, rather than the modem, does the dialing. In such installations, the modem operates in Dumb mode (no Auto Dial capability), yet must go off hook in Originate mode to connect with answering modems.

**MIB** Management Information Base. A repository of characteristics and parameters managed in a network device such as a NIC, hub, switch, or router. Each managed device knows how to respond to standard queries issued by network management protocols. To be compatible with CMIP, SNMP, SNMP-2, RMON, or RMON-2, devices gather statistics and respond to queries in the manner specified by those specific standards. Within the Internet MIB employed for SNMP (Simple Network Management Protocol)-based management, ASN.1 (Abstract Syntax Notation One) is used to describe network management variables. These variables, which include such information as error counts or on/off status of a device,